

# GOD'S HEART FOR THE LOST

- It is so important as Pastors and Christian Leaders that we have a passion for seeing the lost come to Christ
- **Evangelism is more caught than taught.** If a Pastor has a passion for seeing his community coming to Christ, it will have a positive effect on encouraging the whole church to have a vision for reaching the lost.
- Every church must have *both an outreach and discipleship focus*. It is so important that as a church we have a *love for our community*. The apostle Paul wrote:  
**“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.”** (Galatians 5:14)
- **Jesus was our example.** He reached out to the Tax Collectors and sinners and ate with them. He attended the wedding where he turned the water into wine. He spent time at the house of a chief tax collector called Zacchaeus.” When people complained Jesus said,  
**“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. “But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’ For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”** (Matthew 9:12-13)
- EVERY HEALTHY CHURCH SHOULD HAVE AN OUTWARD FOCUS BEYOND THE WALLS OF THE CHURCH
- It is so important that we *reach out into our community* with the love of Christ (**Church in the streets**)
- We also need to look for God given opportunities of *servicing the community* (**Church of Hope**)

**Jesus said,** “You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, **a servant is not greater than his master**; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him.

**“If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.”** (John 13:13-17)

AS CHRISTIAN LEADERS IT IS SO IMPORTANT THAT WE ARE EXAMPLES TO OUR CHURCH MEMBERS OF WHAT TRUE SERVANTHOOD IS. IF A PASTOR HAS A SERVANT HEART IT WILL PERMEATE THE LIVES OF THOSE WHOM HE SHEPHERDS

- AS CHRISTIAN LEADERS WE NEED TO HAVE A VISION AND A BURDEN TO REACH THE LOST AND THE HURTING.

- **IT BEGINS BY SEEKING GOD FOR HIS COMPASSION FOR LOST SOULS.** *The compassion which caused Jesus Christ to lay down His life as a ransom for many.*

“But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. “Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few. “Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest.”

**JESUS THEN CALLED HIS TWELVE DISCIPLES AND BESTOWED UPON THEM THE DELEGATED POWER AND AUTHORITY THAT HE HAD, AND SENT THEM OUT TO FIND THE LOST SHEEP OF ISRAEL.**

As pastors we also need to be equipping and encouraging our church members to actively reach out to the lost and hurting, as we lead by EXAMPLE.

- **INTIMACY WITH JESUS IS THE KEY TO SEEING HIS HEART FOR THE LOST BECOMING A GREATER REALITY IN OUR OWN LIFE.**
- **Our love for our community and commitment to reaching the lost grows as we make our relationship with Jesus Christ our first priority. (We cannot allow the busyness of ministry life to rob us of our time with the Lord)**
- **When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marvelled. **And they realized that they had been with Jesus.** (Acts 4:13)**

“Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.”  
**(Psalm 37:4)**

AS WE PRAY FOR THE LOST AND SEEK HIS FACE WE BEGIN TO GAIN GOD’S HEART FOR THE LOST

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

“Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” **(Hebrews 12:2)**

## **JESUS LAID DOWN HIS LIFE FOR YOU AND ME. HE LAID IT DOWN FOR THE WHOLE WORLD**

- JESUS HIMSELF SHARED MUCH ABOUT GOD'S LOVE FOR THE LOST. HE SAID,

**“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?**

**“And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’**

**I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.” (Luke 15:17) AND**

**AND IN THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON, HOW WHEN THE FATHER SAW HIS PRODIGAL SON IN THE DISTANCE RETURNING HOME HE,**

**“...had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.” (Luke 15:20)**

AND RESTORED HIM TO FULL SONSHIP AND HAD A GREAT PARTY TO CELEBRATE HIS RETURN, SAYING,

**“for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry.” (Luke 15:24)**

- When we have Christ's compassion for the lost we begin to have a passion to reach the lost
- THE APOSTLE PAUL was not ashamed of the gospel.

**“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.” (Romans 1:16)**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- He knew the importance of seeing souls saved and <b>ALSO</b> encouraging <b>others</b> to be active in the area of Evangelism. He said to the young Pastor Timothy who was his spiritual son,</li></ul> |
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**“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with long suffering and teaching” (2 Timothy 4:2)**

**“But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry.” (2 Timothy 4:5)**

- **THE APOSTLE PAUL KNEW THE HEART OF GOD FOR LOST SOULS BECAUSE HIS PASSION WAS TO KNOW CHRIST**

**The Apostle Paul wrote:**

“But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.” **(Philippians 3:7-8)**

- **THIS LOVE FOR CHRIST compelled the Apostle Paul to preach the gospel and to share his faith in Christ.**

“Now while Paul waited for them in Athens (that was for Silas and Timothy), his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols. Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentile worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there.” (Acts 17:16-17)

The Apostle Paul also wrote,

“For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!” (1 Corinthians 9:16)

- **THE APOSTLE PAUL KNEW GOD’S HEART FOR EVERY SOUL. (He became all things to all men that he might by all means save some).**

- The great revivalist John Wesley also wrote:

“Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.”

- **WHEN WE SPEND TIME WITH GOD HE WILL GIVE US HIS VISION FOR REACHING THE LOST (His heart to reach the lost)**

- Ministry is all about people. Evangelism is all about bringing a message of hope to the lost

- “The face of a killer started David Wilkerson (The founder of Teen Challenge) on his lonely crusade. One night in his country parsonage (his ministry living quarters) David picked up a Life magazine and saw the tormented face of a teenage gang member accused with six others of brutally murdering another teenager. **And David Wilkerson had to help.**

- EVERY VISION MUST LEAD TO STEPS OF ACTION TO SEE IT COME TO PASS
- **Armed only with the gospel, David Wilkerson went into the slums – and the miracles happened. Crime hardened gang leaders knelt in the streets to pray, frightened children sobbed out their loneliness and anger, and heroin addicts found the courage to break their addiction**
- **WE ALL HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO REACH THE LOST**

*The Apostle Paul wrote:*

“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:

*“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!”* (Romans 10:14-15)

- **AS CHRISTIAN LEADERS WE ALSO HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY OF HELPING TO ENCOURAGE AND EQUIP ALL OF OUR CHURCH MEMBERS TO SHARE THIER FAITH. (So that all can share the love and hope that we have in Christ with the lost and hurting).**

“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the **EQUIPPING** of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.” (Ephesians 4:11-13)

- **We all have a part to play in seeing God’s Kingdom being established here on earth**

- WE MUST NEVER DOUBT THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL TO TRANSFORM OUR CITIES AND VILLAGES

- As we pray and intercede for our cities and villages we will have a compulsion to go into the harvest field to share the good news of the gospel, **speaking the truth in love**. THE HARVEST IS RIPE NOW

**Jesus said**, “Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!” (John 4:35)

- After a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; they were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

- Therefore those who were scattered **WENT EVERYWHERE PREACHING THE WORD (Acts 8:4)**

- Sometimes the trials that we experience help us to refocus on God or to **shake us up if we have become too settled in our comfort zones. God always has more planned for our life and church**

- **PHILIP THE EVANGELIST WAS ONE OF THOSE WHO WAS SCATTERED**

**“Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.**

**For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed.**

**AND THERE WAS GREAT JOY IN THAT CITY” (Acts 8:5-8)**

- The gospel is good news. It is the only hope for humanity. Only Jesus can save and set the captives free. He who the Son sets free is free indeed.

**Jesus Himself said,** “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul.” **(Matthew 16:26)**

- Backed by prayer and intercession, the gospel has the power to transform our cities. The city of Samaria was transformed by the gospel

- As we spend time in His presence, God will give us his strategy and heart for the lost in our cities and villages

- Like Gideon who defeated an army of 135,000 with just 300 men as he followed the LORD’s instructions, we too will experience success as we follow God’s strategy for reaching the lost in our communities.

- The Lord promises to be with us always, so we can step out in this confidence as we follow His vision for reaching our communities and preach the gospel.

- HOW WE MUST ALSO ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER IN THE BODY OF CHRIST TO HELP SEE OUR CITIES AND VILLAGES COME TO CHRIST

- WE ARE A TEAM (We are all on the stage of redemption reaching out to an audience of lost souls)
- The first church moved in power and souls were added to the church daily

- **THEY WERE ALL OF ONE ACCORD** AND THEY HAD FAVOUR WITH ALL PEOPLE

“So continuing daily with **one accord** in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:46-47)

- PSALM 133 says how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

**UNITY IS VERY IMPORTANT TO GOD**

- Jesus fervently prayed to His Father that His followers would be brought to complete unity. (John 17:6-23)

- Jesus Himself said, “By this all will know that you are My disciples if you have love for one another” (John 13:35)

- TODAY THERE IS A WORLD FULL OF LOST SOULS. In Europe only a small percentage of people are now believers. In India over one billion people do not know the love of Christ personally
- Jesus said, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creatures. If we love our community we will respond to this call.

- The word of the Lord came to Jonah for him to **arise** and go to Nineveh, that great city, and to preach a message calling that city to repentance

- Jonah initially disregarded this call to preach to those in Nineveh and arose to flee to Tarshish

*i) Whether it was because of fear*

*ii) Whether it was because he had no real concern for the lost in Nineveh (which was most likely the case as he later became angry when God showed mercy on Nineveh), or*

*iii) Whether it was because he had his own agenda*

THE SIMPLE FACT WAS THAT JONAH WAS RUNNING FROM THE LORD'S CALL FOR HIM TO PREACH TO THOSE WHO WERE IN DANGER OF PERISHING IN NINEVEH

- ***All people were impacted by his decision not to preach at Nineveh***

- His life was in turmoil

- Those on the ship that he was travelling in were in danger of being destroyed, and

- Nineveh was about to be judged and destroyed

- How we must all respond to the call to reach the lost

- GOD LOVES ALL PEOPLE AND HIS DESIRE IS THAT NONE WOULD PERISH

- There are now countless millions of precious souls that are heading down the broad path that is leading to hell and destruction (blinded by the little god of this world)

- Countless millions of youth are having their lives destroyed through drugs and alcohol as they try to live in world full of pain and suffering

- JONAH BEGAN PRAYING IN THE BELLY OF THE WHALE. After three days and three nights the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land



- After spending much time in prayer Jonah responded to the Lord's second call to go to Nineveh to preach to them the message of the Lord
- The people from Nineveh turned from their evil ways and were saved as God relented from bringing upon them the disaster that he had planned to bring
- **THERE ARE COUNTLESS MILLIONS IN NEED OF SALVATION.** People that Jesus Christ bled and died for.

- **AS PASTORS AND CHRISTIAN LEADERS**

- i) We need to have a love for our community
- ii) We need to draw close to Jesus to get His heart and His compassion for the lost
- iii) We need to seek God for His vision and strategy to reach the lost in our city
- iv) We must believe in the power of the gospel to change lives and encourage all those in our church to share their faith
- v) We must seek to encourage other Pastors and believers as we strive to maintain unity within the Body of Christ. A key to experiencing God's favour and blessings, and
- vi) We must simply just step out in obedience and "Go" into all the world and share the gospel beginning with our own community

- **JESUS CAME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST**

- He gave His life for this cause
- The Harvest is ripe. There are multitudes in the valley of decision
- So too must we give our life to seeing those bound up by the devil being set free and becoming part of the family of God
- He who wins souls is wise, and
- Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever

**I WILL NOW CONCLUDE BY SHARING ABOUT ONE MAN WHO HAD GOD'S HEART FOR THE LOST**

## **JOHN HARPER (A true hero of the faith)**

- John Harper was born to a pair of solid Christian parents on May the 29<sup>th</sup>, 1872
- On the last Sunday of March 1886, when 13 years old, John Harper received Jesus as the Lord of his life
- Four years later at the age of 17, John Harper began preaching in the streets of his village pouring out his soul to see lost people come to Christ
- As John Harper's life unfolded he was consumed by a passion to read and to preach the Word of God
- After five or six years of toiling on street corners preaching the gospel and working in a mill during the day, John Harper started his own church in September of 1896.
- This church started with just 25 members and over the next 13 years grew to 500 members
- During this time John Harper got married but shortly after was widowed. However during this brief marriage God blessed him with a beautiful little girl named Nana.
- Ironically, John Harper almost drowned on three occasions
- When two and a half years of age, he almost drowned when he fell into a well but his mother resuscitated him
- At the age of 26 he was swept out to sea by a reverse current and barely survived
- And if this was not enough, at the age of 32 he faced death on a leaking ship in the Mediterranean.
- It was like God was preparing him for what would come next
- On the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 1912 the RMS Titanic was sailing swiftly on the bitterly cold ocean waters
- On board this ship were many rich people
- At 11.40 pm on that fateful night, an iceberg scraped the ships starboard side and ripping open six watertight air compartments
- The sea poured in.

- On board the ship that night was John Harper and his much beloved six year old daughter Nana.
- According to documented reports as soon as it became apparent the boat was about to sink, he immediately took his daughter to a lifeboat
- It is reasonable to assume that this widowed preacher could also have easily got on board this lifeboat and been saved
- However this thought never crossed John Harper's mind
- He bent down and kissed his precious little girl; looking into her eyes he told her that she would see him again someday.
- The flares going off in the dark sky reflected the tears on his face as he turned and headed towards the crowd of desperate humanity on the sinking ocean liner
- As the rear of the huge ship began to lurch upwards, John Harper made his way up the deck yelling, "Women, children and unsaved into the life boats."
- As the ship began to break in half many people dived into the icy waters. 1528 people went into the frigid waters.
- John Harper was seen swimming frantically to people in the water leading them to Christ before hypothermia became fatal
- John Harper swam up to one young man who had climbed up on a piece of debris
- John Harper between breaths said "Are you saved?" This young man replied no.
- Harper then tried to lead him to Christ only to have the young man who was in shock, reply no.
- John Harper then took off his own life jacket and threw it to the young man
- A few minutes later John Harper swam back to this young man and led him to Christ
- Of the 1528 people who went into the icy waters that night only six survived. One of them was this young man
- Four years later, at a survivors meeting, this young man stood up in tears and recounted how John Harper had led him to Christ
- Mr Harper had tried to swim back to help others, yet because of the cold had become too weak to swim.
- HIS LAST WORDS BEFORE GOING UNDER IN THE FRIGID WATERS WERE, **"Believe on the Name of the Lord Jesus and you will be saved."**